

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 261724Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

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INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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DIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION USNATO

USMISSION USUN

USNMR SHAPE BEL

C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 2542

USCICNEUR FOR POLAD

USDOCOSOUTH FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MOPS CY TU UN

SUBJECT: AVLONA SITUATION: POSSIBLE CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS

REF: NICOSIA 2514 (DTG 251530Z AUG 76)

1. REFTEL DESCRIBED SERIES OF INCIDENTS WHICH OCCURRED AUGUST 25
IN THE AREA OF AVLONA VILLAGE AND WHICH APPEARED TO BE SERIOUS
TURKISH VIOLATION OF CYPRUS CEASEFIRE.

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2. AUGUST 25 INCIDENTS TOOK TWO FORMS: (A) 30 TURKISH "FARMERS"

MOVED INTO DMZ TO CHALLENGE UNFICYP FORCES THERE, AND (B) UNIFORMED TURKISH SOLDIERS ENTERED DMZ IN SIX LOCATIONS IN PLATOON STRENGTH. (COMMENT: IN REFTTEL WE REPORTED THAT THESE SIX INCURSIONS OCCURRED ALL ACROSS THE DMZ. THIS WAS INCORRECT. ALL SIX INCIDENTS TOOK PLACE IN THE AREA FROM AVLONA TO MORPHOU IN ZONE COVERED BY TURK'S 49TH MECHANIZED REGIMENT. FACT THAT PLATOONS WERE FROM ONLY ONE REGIMENT, AS OPPOSED TO SEVERAL REGIMENTS ALONG THE FDL, SUGGESTS THAT TURKISH MOVE, WHILE STILL WORRISOME, WAS RELATIVELY LOCALIZED AND THUS LESS SERIOUS THAN WE EARLIER HAD BEEN LED TO BELIEVE. END COMMENT.)

3. REPORTS FROM UNFICYP AUGUST 26 INDICATE THAT ALL SIX PLATOONS RETURNED TO THEIR LINES FOLLOWING AN ORDER FROM TURKISH CHIEF OF STAFF (COS). SITUATION WAS QUIET AS OF NOON LOCAL AUGUST 26. TURKISH COS AND UNFICYP COS WERE MEETING A.M. AUGUST 26 TO TRY TO AVOID FUTURE INCIDENTS IN THE AREA.

4. THE AUGUST 25-26 FLURRY OF ACTIVITY IN THE DMZ POINTS UP THE WAY IN WHICH LOCALIZED MILITARY ACTION CAN ESCALATE INTO POLITICAL PROBLEMS. WE SPECULATE THAT THE AVLONA CASE BEGAN WHEN THE TURKS DECIDED TO RESETTLE THE FORMER GREEK VILLAGE AND WHEN THE NEW OCCUPANTS WISHED TO CARRY OUT FARMING ACTIVITIES IN THE TRADITIONAL VILLAGE LANDS LOCATED IN THE DMZ. IN ORDER TO CARRY OUT FARMING THEY HAD TO DISPLACE GREEK CYPRIOTS WHO HAD BEEN, FROM FALL 1975, ESCORTED INTO THE SAME AREA BY UNFICYP. UNFICYP GROUND RULES WERE THAT GREEK CYPRIOTS WHO OWNED THE LAND BEFORE 1974 COULD BE ESCORTED INTO THE AREA TO CONTINUE THEIR AGRICULTURAL WORK.

5. THE TURKISH AUTHORITIES HAD ALWAYS TAKEN THE POSITION THAT THE STATUS OF THE DMZ WAS OPEN. THEY HAD ALWAYS OPPOSED USE OF THE LAND IN THE DMZ SOLELY BY GREEK CYPRIOTS, BUT THEY HAD NOT TAKEN ACTION AGAINST SUCH USE. THE SITUATION CAUSED BY THE OCCUPATION OF THE VILLAGE SEEMED TO MAKE THE TURKISH MILITARY REALIZE THAT NOT ENOUGH HAD BEEN DONE TO ESTABLISH A TURKISH CLAIM TO ANY ULTIMATE DISPOSAL OF THE LAND IN THE DMZ. IN ORDER TO RECTIFY THIS, THE TURKISH MILITARY BEGAN TO TAKE A VERY HARD LINE ABOUT GREEK CYPRIOT FARMING ACTIVITIES; TALK ABOUT THE TURKISH RIGHT TO FIFTY PERCENT OF

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THE DMZ; AND TAKE PHYSICAL ACTION AGAINST UNFICYP AND GREEK CYPRIOT FARMERS IN AREAS WHICH THE TURKS CONSIDER TO BE ON THEIR SIDE OF THE MEDIAN LINE.

6. UNFICYP SAW THIS AS A NEW POLICY ON THE SIDE OF THE TURKS AND TOOK A STRONG STAND AGAINST ANY CHANGE IN THE STATUS QUO. THIS WAS SEEN BY THE TURKS AS A PRO-GREEK STANCE, AND THEY BEGAN TO WIDEN THE CONFRONTATION AREA OUTSIDE OF AVLONA. IN

THE MOST RECENT INSTANCE, UNFICYP RESPONDED BY AUGMENTING THE BRITISH FORCES NORMALLY IN THE SECTOR WITH INDIVIDUALS FROM ALL OF THEIR CONTINGENTS SO THAT TURKS WOULD HAVE TO ACT AGAINST A TRUE MULTINATIONAL FORCE--THIS APPROACHES THE ULTIMATE MORAL PRESSURE UNFICYP CAN BRING TO BEAR ON THE TURKS AND IS A MOVE OF LAST RESORT.

7. MEANWHILE, TURKISH CIVILIAN AUTHORITIES, BOTH "TFSC" AND THE TURKISH EMBASSY, SEEMED UNABLE TO AFFECT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE TURKISH MILITARY. "TFSC" OFFICIALS IN PARTICULAR SEEMED TO TAKE THE LINE THAT THESE WERE STRICTLY MILITARY MATTERS AND THAT NOTHING COULD BE DONE ABOUT THEM EXCEPT BY LOCAL COMMANDERS. THE CIVILIANS HAVE NOW, HOWEVER, BEGUN TO SEE THE POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS OF THIS ISSUE. THEY ARE ALSO CLAIMING THAT THE STATUS OF THE DMZ IS UNDETERMINED; NO ONE CAN CONDUCT ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN THE ZONE MERELY BECAUSE THEY "OWNED THE LAND" BEFORE 1974; AND THE TURKS HAVE A RIGHT TO USE AND DETERMINE THE DISPOSITION OF ONE-HALF OF THE AREA OF THE DMZ IN ANY FINAL TERRITORIAL SETTLEMENT. IT APPEARS TO US THAT IN THIS CASE THE MILITARY HAVE GOTTEN OUT IN FRONT OF THE CIVILIAN AUTHORITIES. THE MILITARY'S STRONG ACTION IN THE DMZ HAS POINTED UP THE FACT THAT THE TURKISH CLAIM TO HALF OF DMZ, WHICH BOTH SIDES INITIALLY AGREED WAS A NO-MAN'S LAND, WAS NOT BASED ON STRONG FOUNDATIONS. THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES DO NOT WANT A CONFRONTATION WITH UNFICYP BUT CANNOT BE SEEN TO BE GIVING IN ON THIS IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE.

8. IN SUM, AN INCIDENT IN THE DMZ HAS FOCUSED POLITICAL ATTENTION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONFRONTATION AREA. WE EXPECT THAT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR UNFICYP TO COME TO ANY LOCAL AGREEMENTS WITH THE TURKISH FORCES WHICH DO NOT APPEAR TO BE AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE TURKISH MILITARY AND

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